

Talk by Kireet JOSHI at the Solar Kitchen
18th April 1999

I think many things that Deepti has spoken need to be minused out. The only truth about me is that I have loved Auroville with all my heart and beyond my heart. In 1969, I remember I had taken a group of students from the Ashram School, and right from the Ashram to Auroville we decided to shout as much as possible, with as much force as possible — one slogan: “We shall build Auroville!” And I can tell you that this is all that inspires me.

When Auroville was proposed by The Mother, you can't imagine how much my heart rejoiced. Later on, Mother told me that there are three steps of our work. The first step was to create the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education in Pondicherry. She built up that Centre of Education and fortunately there were many, many great-distinguished educationists who happened to be there at that time at the Ashram.

Pavitra-da — many of you have heard of him, but never met him — he was one of the greatest saints that I have met in my life. And you know in the Agenda, what Mother has spoken about him. After his passing, his entire individuality has been kept intact. That is the sadhana that he had. And he was at the head, he was the director of the Centre of Education, and I had the privilege of being his assistant from 1957 until the time he passed away in 1969. In fact, on the day on which he passed away, he was still active; in fact, I had taken my file to discuss with him without knowing his real situation physically. So, his perception, his guidance...

I should also like to mention that we had among ourselves even before I came to Pondicherry, one of the greatest educationists of our country, Dr. Indra Sen. You know Aster very well, but perhaps you do not know that she happens to be the daughter of one of the greatest educationists of our country. Even now, if you go to Delhi University and the moment you mention Dr. Indra Sen's name, all the gates are open for you in Delhi University — even today, because they remember him with so much of gratitude. He taught in our Centre of Education — psychology and philosophy.

We had Sir Kumar Mitra, one of the great historians, and he was the joint director of our Centre of Education.

And then, we had also very great students, many of them now are doing so much of leadership work in our country, and in the Centre of Education, and even Aster herself is a product of our Centre of Education.

And then, we had excellent opportunities, conditions of making what I call the only unique experiment on education in the world history. If you study the entire history of the world, and consider every experiment of education that has been done, in my consciousness, there is none which was so difficult, so comprehensive, so radical and so glorious. It was an experiment to what I call “inventing a new method of education, a new system of education, a new mode of education”.

Mother told me: this is our first work. She said: the second step is the building of Auroville, and the third is building up new India and new world. This is the third step of our work.

In my own evolution, I was privileged to be associated with the Centre of Education in Pondicherry but I missed the second step. I did not come to stay in Auroville. Indira Gandhi invited me to join the Government of India and opportunities seemed to be opening up before me where I could contribute to the third step of the work, the making of new India and the New World.

Again, Mother had given such an exceptional situation that you can never fabricate by any means of imagination or any kind of devices, any kind of experiences. I'll tell you some other time the story of all the work that happened at that time, but this very work took me straight back into Auroville. I joined the Ministry of Education in 1976 January and Indira asked me to go to Auroville on May 27th, 1976. So immediately, one of the first tasks that was given to me was to go to Auroville. So although I had missed the second step, I was forced to go into the next second step. And I have never ceased to dwell upon the second step, although, as Deepti said, for 10 years I was withdrawn for many reasons. But today, when I am here with you, I feel extremely happy and, like all of you, I am only a servant of Auroville and I want to remain as such forever. I am very happy that today is an occasion where this new Centre is being operated, the Centre for Human Unity. As Deepti said, one of the ideas that had come to me was that we should have in Auroville a Centre of Human Unity and since

then I am very happy that today, when I come back after so many years, I am called upon to speak on this subject. It is also a privilege, a coincidence which is not a coincidence, but it is something in which I feel personally very much involved.

I felt that our students in Auroville do not have sufficient room, sufficient facility to be educated at the higher level. We have a good Kindergarten, we have a good Transition, we have got Last School, After School, and many other schools in Auroville. But our students are growing up and we need to give them education at higher level, we have to build up. And this centre, to my mind, whatever may be other merits of it and there are..., but to my mind it can be used as a great opportunity to build up a centre of higher education. We shall talk about it later on, but for the moment let me tell you that this is a beginning of a new chapter.

I have here a few ideas, not on the centre, but on the theme of human unity. And since this theme is directly related with the aims of Auroville, I thought I should summarize a few important points from the Ideal of Human Unity and the Human Cycle — these two great works of Sri Aurobindo — so that we can refresh ourselves, dedicate ourselves to this great task. I invite you all to give your energies so that this centre can be developed as one of the most important centres in the world on the theme of unity of humankind. So let me first present as soon as possible and as quickly as possible a few ideas that I have written down here:

Dwelling on human unity

It is a privilege to be associated with Sri Aurobindo World Centre for Human Unity.

The idea of this Centre was mooted several years ago, and I had always held that this Centre even in its formation would provide the much-needed focus to the aim of education, which is being developed here. It is heartening that with the efforts of all concerned, the Government of India has sanctioned Rs.25 lakhs towards the establishment of this Centre.

This would be a good occasion to dwell on the theme of "Human Unity."

The aim of universal solidarity has come up in the forefront of human idealism today; but we are not able to understand the real significance of this turn; we have not yet grasped the necessity of this solidarity, on the one hand, and its dangers, on the other. Its necessity is still being conceived in terms of the drive towards economic centralisation, legislative and social uniformity and towards mechanisation even in matters of human management and control of human affairs. It is still not being recognised that social and political unity of humankind is not necessarily propitious, and its necessity lies in the fact that humanity can fulfil its higher dreams for freedom and of brotherhood only if the sense of oneness, the sense of equal or equitable sharing and the sense of mutuality and harmony can prevail. As Sri Aurobindo has warned us: *"It must be remembered that greater social or political unity is not necessarily a boon in itself it is only worth pursuing in so far as it provides a means and a framework for a better, richer, more happy and puissant individual and collective life."*

Let us take the example of the Roman Empire; for it provides a historical illustration of an organisation of unity which transcended the limits of the nation, and its advantages and disadvantages are there perfectly typified. The advantages of unity that was forged by that great Empire were its admirable organisation, peace, widespread security, order and material well being. But the disadvantages arose from its tendency to centralise, to improve uniformity, and, as a result, the individual, the city, the region had to sacrifice their independent life and they became mechanical parts of a machine. The organisation was great and admirable, but the individual dwindled and life lost its colour, richness, variety, freedom and victorious impulse towards creation. Eventually, therefore, the Roman Empire declined and failed; the huge mechanism of centralisation and uniformity brought about the smallness and feebleness of the individual; mechanisation prevailed, and the Empire lost even its great conservative vitality and died of an increasing stagnation.

From this example, we can conclude as to what is likely to happen if the push towards unity which has become prominent comes to be sustained only on the basis of uniformity, centralisation and mechanisation. We can foresee that after some first outburst of satisfied and joyous activities there would follow a long period of conservation; there would then come about increasing stagnancy and ultimately decay. We must, therefore, underline that unity, which must come about, must be created under other conditions and with safeguards, which will keep the race intact in the roots of its vitality, richly diverse in its oneness. We must have unity, but we must also have decentralisation, diversity and richness of interchange. But this

can happen only if humanity and not only leading powers but all the nations join together to create a World Union of free nations.

We have to realise the peril of the World-State as opposed to World Union; for if it comes about, the nation as we know it might disappear and a strict unification would come to be imposed; a vast uniformity would come to rule; and a united humanity would result in a regulated socialisation. This must be avoided; we must ensure vigorous life of free and united nations; we must ensure liberty, mobile variations that act upon each other, and united but differentiated life.

But the central difficulty of synthesising unity with freedom lies in the tendency that is created in favour of centrifugal forces, — forces that tend to assert so much of independence that it would become inimical to unity. And this, in turn, results in reaction that favours heavy hand of uniformity and mechanisation. What, then, is the solution?

In clear terms, the solution lies in creating a new psychology that is able to sustain interrelationship between nations which does not allow freedom to lapse into egoism, sense of rivalry, sense of division. Freedom must be wedded to the sense of mutuality and interdependent sharing of the contributions that each nation would bring into the common pool of richness of culture. This necessarily implies an inner change. We come here to the issue of unlocking the spiritual light and force, which lies latent in all of us, and which alone can bring about the needed inner change.

In recent times, two ideas have become prominent, and if they are rightly fostered by humanity, we can arrive at universal solidarity that is based upon freedom and mutuality. The first idea is that of internationalism and the second idea is that of the religion of humanity. But both these ideas will require to be more chiselled than what they attempt to convey to us today. Mere internationalism may provide a sense of wideness and globality. But unless internationalism comes to acknowledge and practise not only the political ideas of liberty, equality, and fraternity, but also their psychological, ethical and spiritual implications, internationalism may run the risk of falling into the peril of the idea of the World-State. The cause of world union of free nations would then come to be injured. Therefore, we have to integrate internationalism with the religion of humanity. But, again, religion of humanity must not be construed in the image of a dogmatic, ritualistic and institutional framework of any particular creed.

Religion of humanity should be conceived in terms of spirituality that transcends the boundaries of institutional religion. Spirituality demands, not adherence to any credal belief, but a living sense of fraternity. It is only when fraternity generates mutual goodwill among human beings and among nations that we can avoid the downward gravitation of unity into uniformity. It is only on the basis of the real brotherhood that the ideals of liberty and equality can become united.

As Sri Aurobindo points out: *"Yet is brotherhood the real key to the triple gospel of the idea of humanity. The union of liberty and equality can only be achieved by the power of human brotherhood and it cannot be founded on anything else. But brotherhood exists only in the soul and by the soul; it can exist by nothing else. For this brotherhood is not a matter either of physical kinship or of vital association or of intellectual agreement. When the soul claims freedom, it is the freedom of its self-development, the self-development of the divine in man in all his being. When it claims equality, what it is claiming is that freedom equally for all and the recognition of the same soul, the same godhead in all human beings. When it strives for brotherhood, it is founding that equal freedom of self-development on a common aim, a common life, a unity of mind and feeling founded upon the recognition of this inner spiritual unity. These three things are in fact the nature of the soul; for freedom, equality, unity are the eternal attributes of the Spirit. It is the practical recognition of this truth, it is the awakening of the soul in man and the attempt to get him to live from his soul and not from his ego which is the inner meaning of religion, and it is that to which the religion of humanity also must arrive before it can fulfil itself in the life of the race."*

In this context, what vision shall we put before ourselves in regard to the activities of life and their organisation if we are prepare ourselves to make our own contribution to the aim of actualisation of human unity which, as we have argued here, can be truly salutary for the human race only if dynamic spirituality is applied? As Sri Aurobindo has pointed out, even in the early stages of spiritualisation the pioneering individuals and the society would make the revealing and finding of the divine Self for human being the first aim of all activities, of education, of science, of ethics, of art, of economic and political structure. There would be an emphasis on embracing of the entire range of knowledge but the whole trend and aim would

be to concentrate on the spirit as the object of discoveries, of self-development and self-finding, even while not neglecting efficiency and chiselled perfection. Physical and psychical sciences would be pursued not merely to gain the knowledge of the world and nature and to use them for material human ends but also to know the spirit in the world and the ways of the spirit in its masks and behind them. Ethics would be pursued not to establish a rule of action, supplementary to the social law but to develop the divine nature in the human being. Art would be pursued to reveal the Truth and Beauty of things visible and invisible in the forms or symbols and significant figures.

The new society would look upon every individual as a living soul, and each one would be given the help and the power so as to grow into self-perfection. This society would give to every individual not only the joy of work but also free leisure to grow inwardly, and lead a simple and beautiful life. Spirituality applied to social organisation would aim at realising the ideal law of social development. This ideal law would seek the harmony of the individual and the society. There is no better formulation of the ideal law of social development than that of Sri Aurobindo: *"Thus the law for the individual is to perfect his individuality by free development from within, but to respect and to aid and be aided by the same free development in others. His law is to harmonise his life with the life of the social aggregate and to pour himself out as a force for growth and perfection on humanity. The law for the community or nation is equally to perfect its corporate existence by a free development from within, aiding and taking full advantage of that of the individual, but to respect and to aid and be aided by the same free development of other communities and nations. Its law is to harmonise its life with that of the human aggregate and to pour itself out as a force for growth and perfection on humanity. The law for humanity is to pursue its upward evolution towards the finding and expression of the Divine in the type of mankind, taking full advantage of the free development and gains of all individuals and nations and groupings of men to work towards the day when mankind may be really and not only ideally one divine family, but even then, when it has succeeded in unifying itself, to respect, aid and be aided by the free growth and activity of its individuals and constituent aggregates."*

The path that lies before us is a difficult path; many might even consider it to be impracticable; many, even if they concede that it is practicable, might not pursue it, since it might seem to be a path that would take extremely long to arrive at success. But we have here the privilege to work out the problems of the transition and to show that the ideals for which we are working are practicable, and that this practicability can be demonstrated sooner rather than later. History teaches that unexpected events take place suddenly because of the past accumulation of the forces. We know of revolutions that have swept off the obstacles of the past within a relatively short period. We may also find, by means of detailed scrutiny of the revolutions of the past, that behind them a spiritual revolution was already taking secret shape. It would not, therefore, seem unreasonable to predict that, considering the critical stage through which we are passing today, there would grow up an increasing number of individuals and even groups with a new urge and resolution to break a new path and to arrive at some fulfilling result rapidly solution is the only solution, the only course of action is to pursue that solution resolutely.

Let us then conclude that we have no reason to fear to aspire. We have no reason to feel discouraged in determining the spiritual course of action; we have no reason merely to stand and watch, — we have every reason to take the staff in our hand and set out for the journey.

Thank You.

ON INTERNAL ORGANISATION OF AUROVILLE

Kireet JOSHI

25 August 1999

I think this Act (Auroville Foundation Act) has some very unique features, which you will not find in any act in the country. If you read between the lines, you will find that the whole Act is so formulated that it would facilitate what Mother has called "divine anarchy". Now this is not written anywhere in the Act itself, but it would facilitate. In one of the chapters Sri Aurobindo has written a few lines on what he calls theocracy. Theocracy is a word today which is very much abused and misunderstood. But divine anarchy is nothing but the rule of the Divine; and since the rule of the Divine is to be conducted from within every individual, the individual is not ruled by somebody outside himself; therefore there is no rulership outside individuals, and since it is the same Divine that rules all the individuals, that Divine causes unity even while permitting diversity. It is for that reason it is anarchy, that is to say, there is no rule from outside. All kind of rules are rules from outside, whether it is monarchy or oligarchy or any kind of democracy. All forms of government that have been formed in the history of the world are forms where some kind of rulership is attributed to some authority outside the individual. If therefore you have an Act in which the individuals constituting the totality have the freedom to grow, and if it is laid down in the Act itself that this freedom is to be ensured, the residents of Auroville should feel free and if any attempt is made to curb this freedom, then there is a provision in the Act itself of an authority whose very duty it is to advise the Governing Board in such a way that this freedom is not curbed. Secondly, this totality of residents has not been given any particular form of governance. Sometime some people reading from outside may feel it is a lacuna in the Act, that no form is given for the Resident Assembly. But from another point of view, it is a safeguard against imposition of any form. So you might say that there is an utter freedom given to the Residents' Assembly to experiment, to make research and to devise forms by which the divine anarchy can be realised. If the residents of Auroville know how to do it, if they ripen themselves into that consciousness, this freedom is ensured in the Act. In the meantime, there is also a provision in the Auroville Act that although there is a Governing Board which may from outside seem to be a Board which would control, superintend, supervise, intervene, supervene and you might say it is a final authority, this Governing Board is required to consult the Residents' Assembly according to this Act itself, and there are provisions in the functions of the Residents' Assembly where it is laid down that Residents' Assembly will organise all the activities of Auroville, so the scope is widest. There is not a single activity which Residents' Assembly cannot organise. As a result I find that Mother's intention that Auroville will be a field of research and particularly the concept of divine anarchy, if the residents of Auroville decide to conceive of the forms, of this form of development and organisation, it would be perfectly possible to do so within the frame-work of this entire Act. These are the special features of the Foundation Act. You will find that as compared to other organisations like there is a Company Act, there is Societies Registration Act, you will find that in these Acts the forms of organisation are already laid down and you can't escape from that. If you have a Society Registration Act you will see that there *shall be* such and such governing body which shall be elected and there are many rules under which election will take place in one form or the other. Everything is straightjacketed. You have no freedom at all to organise in the way in which you want, whereas in this Act there is no such provision. I personally feel therefore that Auroville organisation for the future should really be developed so that what Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have said — the rule of the Divine in each individual — may ultimately operate. This is entirely within our hands, in the residents' hands. But it has a big responsibility and that responsibility is that every individual has to be tended, and this is a very important condition. It is not a question of majority and minority, it is not a question of opinion building, it is not a question of a few against the others. If you read Sri Aurobindo's writings, there is a constant emphasis on all, and therefore our organisation must be such that it serves all. That means every individual. The truth of individualism, as I said earlier in another context, is not merely the guarantee of individual freedom. This is something that is highest in many constitutions — that the moment you give the freedom of expression, freedom of association, you have given the best and the highest. That is not the concept of Auroville. Individualism is fundamentally service of the Divine in each individual. This is the real truth of individualism: to regard every individual who carries within himself the Divine and therefore the discovery of the Divine and manifestation of this Divine is the

fundamental truth of individualism. And since this discovery and manifestation cannot take place without the freedom, therefore underline the freedom. You can't compel an individual to discover the Divine, you cannot compel, by very nature you cannot compel. It is only by freedom, by willing consciousness, by voluntary consciousness that the Divine can be discovered. So, when we say that Auroville is for freedom — this is very often voiced among many people, that we are here free — it is an incomplete sentence. We are here for freedom certainly, but freedom to discover the Divine. In fact, the very first article of Auroville Charter speaks of the willing — willing means freely willing — servitors of the Divine Consciousness. So, merely saying that we are free is not enough. Merely because we are free, it doesn't mean that it is only to be limited to framing of free opinion. Framing of free opinion, freedom to question an opinion is sometimes regarded as the highest height of democracy and freedom, but freedom to question is only the first step. We question anything for what? Not for the sake of questioning but for a quest: questioning to arrive at a conclusion, free conclusion, freedom to frame an opinion. In the consciousness that opinion-making is only the first step, the larger step is that an opinion is to be contrasted with another opinion and that with another opinion and to realise that behind every opinion, there is a truth and that ultimately you have to arrive at the highest synthesis of all opinions, so that each opinion is satisfied. In other words, in fact, it can even be said that you go beyond opinion making. This is the kind of freedom that we have and this is what is proposed to us. This is how I understand. I am only giving my reflections on what Mother and Sri Aurobindo have said, what the different statements which Mother has made even with regard to admission to Auroville, with regard to the development of Auroville, many other things.

I think the first important point that has to be noted is regarding the entry of people to Auroville. I had recently a discussion with the Entry Group and I had an occasion to learn what is being done in regard to the entry and I had an occasion to read once again and there is a statement of the Mother: "Are invited men of good will who aspire to lead a higher and truer life." Now, these words are extremely important. I think many people feel that good will is good gentlemanliness. I think this is general — to many people, when you speak of good will, this is how it is translated. If you are a good neighbour, if you are decent and if you have good manners and you are not quarrelsome, you are fine, then you have good will. I think we have to understand — that is my reflection on it — that good will is a concept of a much higher dimension. In the western philosophy, good will came to be defined best in the philosophy of Kant, in German philosophy. In fact, his whole philosophy is called the philosophy of good will. This whole ethics is an ethics of good will and his definition of good will is that good will is a free will that has decided to counteract everything that pulls you down to a lower life, and deliberately puts itself towards three concepts: God, freedom, immortality. This is his definition of good will. On one hand, you deliberately decide that all lower impulses will be combated against, and on the other hand there is a constant push, free pursuit, not under compulsion: You have really decided deliberately that you will constantly move towards God, freedom and immortality. In fact these three concepts, he says, are the postulates of good will, real postulates, that means goodwill does not exist if these three things are not pursued. And if you read *The Life Divine*, the very first paragraph of *The Life Divine* where the human aspiration has been described by Sri Aurobindo, he speaks of this very ideal, where he says that the earliest formula of wisdom also promises to be its last: God, Freedom, Bliss, Immortality. Same words, almost, have been repeated by Sri Aurobindo. In fact, this pursuit of these ideals is the very condition of divine life. And I personally believe that when Mother put down the word good will, it is not gentlemanliness, it is not good neighbourliness — that of course should be, that is understood. I always felt that Auroville is a field of advanced research, not only a field of research, but advanced research. And this, I think, people should make it very clear to everybody: that certain ordinary things have already been overpassed by the people who are here. They have tried, experimented many things. This is not a field of experimentation of fashions of life. There are many fashions going on. There are one fashion over here, another fashion over there, third fashion over there and some people, if they feel that they are now tired of one fashion and want to try another fashion and they come to Auroville and say that Auroville is a field of freedom and you can experiment with this fashion or that fashion, I personally would like to tell them very clearly, "This is a field of advanced research." That is to say you have already finished your journey with freely making experiments with various fashions of life. Having done it, now you have come to the conclusion that you want a higher and truer life. The very first proposition of the Mother is: we are aspiring for higher and truer life. If this decision has not been arrived at, it is incomplete,

you are not yet ready to entry into Auroville, this is according to me. There are many other opinions and I am not speaking anything dogmatically, but this is how I reflect, when I reflect upon Mother's words. And then, when you read further, you find certain further elucidation in some of the statements of the Mother. Take for example this statement of 21st March 1956 — much before Auroville's birth. This but small statement is very important where Mother has said, "The age of Capitalism and business is drawing to a close, but the age of Communism too will pass." In 1956, at the time when Communism was at its zenith, Mother has said, "but the age of Communism too will pass", and thereafter she says, "Communism having no more utility will be transformed into something else, that will express a higher truth." And the last word of the Mother is, "We know this truth." This is a very categorical statement, "We know this truth and we are working for it so that it may rain upon earth." Now I would like to submit that everybody who wants to enter into Auroville should read this statement. We are not here to experiment with capitalism and communism. Both of them are outdated as far as Auroville is concerned. We have to ask ourselves when Mother says "We know this truth", what is this truth.

Now in this context, I would like to refer to a very important statement that Sri Aurobindo has made in *The Human Cycle*, while describing the ideal law of social development. This is the statement which, I think, is one of the elucidation of the statement "We know this truth": "The law for the individual is to perfect his individuality by free development from within, but to respect and to aid and be aided by the same free development in others." It's a very important statement. To say, "Oh, I want to develop myself freely", very good, very fine, but add this statement also, "but to respect and to aid and be aided by the same free development in others". "His law", that is to say the law of the individual, "is to harmonise his life with the life of the social aggregate and to pour himself out as a force for growth and perfection on humanity." (*The Human Cycle*, Vol. XV, p.63, Cent. Ed.) (As I opened this page I found the Mother's picture here, so I feel as if Mother wants me to read this very sentence once again.) Now in addition to that, Sri Aurobindo says, "The law for the community" — just as there is a law of the individual there is a law of the community — "the law for the community or nation is equally to perfect its corporate existence by a free development from within" — Auroville should feel free to develop from within and that is why I referred to the Foundation Act in the very beginning, that this freedom is granted, is guaranteed by the Act itself, and this guarantee is given by the Parliament, so that nobody can change it. It's a very important guarantee. Just as in the case of the individual, so in the case of community: "aiding and taking full advantage of that of the individual, but to respect and to aid and be aided by the same free development of other communities and nations." This also is a very important qualification. "Its law is to harmonise its life with that of the human aggregate and to pour itself out as a force for growth and perfection on humanity." And now comes the third law, the law for humanity: "The law for humanity is to pursue its upward evolution towards the finding and expression of the Divine in the type of mankind, taking full advantage of the free development and gains of all individuals and nations and groupings of men, to work towards the day when mankind may be really and not only ideally one divine family, but even then, when it has succeeded in unifying itself, to respect, aid and be aided by the free growth and activity of its individuals and constituent aggregates."

Now this full paragraph to my mind gives us a perfect understanding of the goal that we have, and that is involved in the very concept of Auroville and in the entry into Auroville. I think this statement should be given to everyone who wants to enter into Auroville. This is my suggestion to everyone, particularly those who are in charge of Entry Group. They should get this printed and say, "Well, this is how we look upon: 'This truth — what Mother has said, we know this truth, and we want to express this truth so that it may rain upon earth.'" Now there is another statement elucidating this very thing. You know, Mother's statements are very short, but very pointed and very sharp. Sometimes because they are short, they seem to be very simple and therefore we feel that "Oh, this is a very easy statement", but when you study it, you find that a very high level of research is demanded. Now here, on 7 September 1965, she says, "Auroville wants to be a universal town where men and women of all communities will be able to live in peace and progressive harmony", and then comes a very important qualification, "above all creeds, all politics and all nationalities, straining to realise human unity." This is a very fundamental statement about Auroville. So anybody who wants to enter Auroville has already to arrive at this point. He has experimented with all creeds already, or at least he has arrived at the consciousness in which creeds don't matter to him at all. Politics is not at all in his veins, in his arteries. Politics meaning thereby all kind of manoeuvring — what the Vedic

call a crooked thinking — this is the Vedic word. All crooked thinking is given up. This is politics: the fundamental aim, the fundamental crux of the word politics, its meaning is: all crooked thinking. You want to achieve some goal and you start immediately winding up. I create one opinion here, one opinion there, canvas it here, canvas it there, all kinds of matters which have been adopted in so called democratic parliament and so on. I want to achieve the success of my opinion, so how shall I do it? All kinds of campaign, slogans — this is politics — instead of stating straight. We have to distinguish between what is called propaganda and action. All politics is propaganda. Without propaganda, there is no politics. All Auroville, according to me, is action. It has nothing to do with propaganda. Once Mother had told me... There was a big debate in the Ashram at one time, when some of us had gone out in the country in 1972. Some people in the Ashram criticised some of us and said, "You are now making a propaganda of Sri Aurobindo." Why, because we were telling people what Sri Aurobindo had said, because Mother had told, at least to some of us, that "this is the year in which you should tell the people what Sri Aurobindo has said for the solutions of the problems of the country." This was the time when Mother told many of us, "You read Sri Aurobindo". Because most of us didn't know what solutions Sri Aurobindo had given to the problems. Even those who felt they knew, when they began to study Sri Aurobindo, they found that they hardly knew, and that there was a need of deeper and deeper study. In fact, I tell you the truth that by that time I had read *The Life Divine* twenty-five times, and yet when I started to find out Sri Aurobindo's solutions in many books — I read many other books also equally — but if somebody said: "Tell me what is the solution," I had no answer as yet. Because Sri Aurobindo's writings are so global and so vast that you have to make a real pointed study again and again to arrive at solutions. This is what I found and I really started studying Sri Aurobindo in 1972, which is a fact in my personal life. And even today I cannot say that I have graduated. Even today it is a fact. This is the difficulty; this is a very tremendous task. So at that time when this was being done, this was the criticism levelled by many people in the Ashram itself: that now here goes the propagandist team outside in the country. So, in order to clarify ourselves whether we were doing right thing or wrong thing, the question was put to the Mother. In fact there is one very good statement of Sri Aurobindo where he says, "propaganda in a work like ours is poison." Very, very stark statement he has made. "Propaganda in regard to the work like that of ours is poison." He says propaganda, advertisement are all right for patent medicines but not for a work of that kind. So this statement was also put before the Mother and then we had put the question, "Mother, what is your directive?" So, She said there is a distinction between propaganda and action. When you put an ideal before the people in such a way as to make a popular appeal so that people may accept it, with a desire that people may accept it, it is propaganda. There is an ideal you put before the people with a desire that people should accept it and then, for that purpose, you turn the phrases, you speak in a language which you think people will understand, will appreciate. You twist it in one way or the other — that is propaganda. And Mother says, "When you put an ideal as it is without any kind of twist, without any compromise whatsoever, then the very statement of the ideal is action, if you can make that statement straightforward, without fear or favour." And I can tell you that thereafter, many of us really felt a need of hard searching: "Are we putting Sri Aurobindo's solutions simply because we want to succeed, that people should come forward and say, 'Oh, there is a big movement' and many people will join and there will be large adherence and large number of people?" We found that all these tendencies in our heart had to be completely washed out. This was a tremendous enlightenment to us and we then said — at least many of us, who then went out, were very, very particular that we don't make any kind of statement in regard to Sri Aurobindo which is not in his stark statement, as Sri Aurobindo has stated. Whether people like it or do not like it, whether people follow it or do not follow it, whether people will join you or do not join you. In any case it's a long practice... In fact, Mother says "beyond all politics". I personally believe that this is the kind of attitude that we should have in Auroville. It is not public opinion making, it is not flagging out an idea for others and then trying to convert the people to that idea. We are here simply to state the ideal as it is, uncompromisingly, and let it be left to the individuals to respond to that ideal. I think this should be the real method of action in Auroville. I am only suggesting what I feel, I have thought over these problems for years, and I am only sharing with you, again I tell you, without dogmatism. There are many ways of looking at things and this is one way of looking at this, and this is how I would like to put it before you. Now let us go forward. Another statement that Mother has made in regard to Auroville, and which is very directly connected with the entry of people to Auroville, Mother says, "Auroville must be at the service of the Truth, beyond all

social, political and religious convictions.” Now this is again a very important statement. As long as we have a religious conviction or a political conviction or a social conviction, we are still to be probationers perhaps, but not yet Aurovillians. We must have gone beyond these convictions and we must be in search of something that goes beyond all social, political and religious convictions. Then we can say that we are now fit to enter into Auroville. Then there is another note on Auroville where Mother has said, “Humanity is not the last run of terrestrial creation. Evolution continues and men will be surpassed. It is for each one to know whether he wants to participate in the advent of the new species. For those who are satisfied with the world as it is, Auroville obviously has no *raison d’être*.” It’s a very categorical statement. I would like to underline this statement very much because very often I am told, “Auroville is for all men of good will”, finished, full stop. It is true! Actually in “good will” everything is contained. If you understand the word “good will” in the way which I have tried to explain. But to elucidate this good will, all this is involved at the present level of our evolution. It is only at this stage that Auroville begins to develop, this is a first starting point. And then there is... I would like to read one last statement of the Mother: “For millennia we have been developing outer means, outer instruments, outer techniques of living and finally those means and techniques are crushing us. The sign of the new humanity is a reversal in the standpoint and understanding that inner knowledge and inner techniques can change the world and master it without crushing it.” It’s a wonderful balm to mankind which is striving to find the true solution. And I read again, “The sign of the new humanity is a reversal in the standpoint and understanding that inner knowledge and inner techniques can change the world and master it without crushing it.” And then Mother adds, “Auroville is the place where this new way of living is being worked out. It is a centre of accelerated evolution, where men must begin to change this world through the power of inner spirit.” I think this should be stated to all the people who want to join Auroville. Because this is the starting point of Auroville and this is elucidated by the Mother further where She says, “We will strive to make Auroville the cradle of the superman.” I wanted to read out these few statements from Mother to underline that Auroville is a field of advanced research. People should really make... and particularly for those people who are educated, who are intellectually developed, for them what I say is directly relevant. It is true that there are many people who are simple hearted, sincere and they are devoted in their own way to what is supreme. Maybe when you read out all this it may make no meaning to them. This doesn’t mean that they have no place in Auroville, that only those who understand all this will have a place in Auroville. But then you can be sure or you have to be sure that they have this heart of sincerity. This is the very important thing, because if the heart is sincere and if there is an opening, very soon they will understand this very easily. There is also a third category to my mind of the people who are... *(end of the cassette first side)*

(...) invitations in the month of November and December at the time of admission, we used to receive hundreds of applications and I used to make classifications of these applications. And Mother used to see every application in detail and ask me many questions about each one. And then she used to decide and she used to make very interesting, amusing remarks: “Take this one, he is a very sincere child”, “He is mischievous but take him”, and for somebody, “He will give trouble but take him”, or “This one is very, very bright, very open, very receptive, take him”, or “Oh, no, this won’t do”, “People will think that he is very bright, but he is not bright”, things of this kind. Mother used to make these remarks — very, very profound statements. And then after taking large numbers of them, She used to ask me, “Now let us make a category of useful children.” This is a very interesting concept: useful. Now if you apply it to Auroville, I really find, you may have a need of a gardener, you may have a need of a cook, you may have a need of an assistant, stenographer, you may have a need of somebody and the given person has all the qualities and in general he is a very nice person, open, you might say, what Mother used to say open, receptive. I think in the Entry Group, all the three categories of people should be seen quite clearly, and accordingly a decision should be made. There are many other considerations which have been made here at present, which I think need to be reconsidered, reviewed, understood properly. It’s a matter of detail and I am not worrying upon this now, this is all that I would like to say as far as the entry is concerned.

There is a very interesting statement which I have received from a few people who have made statements on “Auroville in the new millennium”, and there is a statement here about entry which is very good. I don’t know if people have read it, many of you might have read it, but I find it to be very interesting. Not that I agree with every statement which is here, but it is an interesting statement, worth studying. There is also a statement that just as there is

an Entry Group, there should be a group in Auroville which can advise people after sometime, when they have come here, lived here: ask them whether they find that they are in the proper place here — not with an intention of expelling or throwing out or not caring for them, no, with a deeper consciousness. There are people who have come, they have experimented, they have lived here, but they may genuinely find that they are out of place here. We should help them instead of just going on and on and on. A person who is not in his proper place is always a problem to himself and to others. Now this also, there should be something on the subject.

Now I come to another subject of the organisation of Auroville and this is connected with the concept of Residents' Assembly. The very word gives a kind of notion, to many of us who are educated in political science, of what is now called Parliament. And Parliament has to do with what is called Parliamentary democracy. This is the concept which automatically arises, and therefore it is natural for some people to think that here we are to develop a kind of Parliamentary democracy. Now this is a subject on which Sri Aurobindo has written at quite good length. What is Parliamentary democracy and whether, in the view of Sri Aurobindo, Parliamentary democracy is the last form of organisation, or whether it is only a step, or whether it was only a step which has outlived its utility. Now Sri Aurobindo has said first of all — this is the conclusion I have arrived at after reading Sri Aurobindo several times, but again I am only speaking my reflections. No dogmatism in it. People might have read Sri Aurobindo in many other ways and we can always share our views. I would like to submit what I think Sri Aurobindo has said. Parliamentary democracy was developed in Great Britain. This is the first thing. It was a stepping-stone. It was valid for a small country like England. It was valid for the leisurely times in which it was developed. But when you have those conditions overpasses, in which the country is not small, or where the times are not this leisurely, Sri Aurobindo said: this form will pass away. It will come to a crisis and will pass away. Second point about democracy itself: Sri Aurobindo has said, democracy is a sign of the coming of the true subjective age. Whenever there is a development of subjective age, that is to say, whenever there is an emphasis on the individual, democracy will flourish. This is what has happened even in the previous cycles of human development. In India we know there was democracy, and even monarchy in India was a democratic monarchy, not an absolute monarchy. It is afterwards when the Muslim invasion took place that they brought into the country, into India, what is called absolute monarchy, where the monarch is the final authority, even an arbitrary man who decides everything dictatorially. Such was never the concept in India. Sri Rama, for example... In India, even now we speak of Ramrajya as an ideal, and Kautilya has written that a real king is one whose own welfare is in the welfare of the people. That is to say that he has no personal welfare at all, his own welfare is in the welfare of the people. A real king is one whose happiness is in the happiness of the people. In other words, he has no personal happiness. As long as he says 'my happiness has to be reconciled with the happiness of the people', he is not the king. He has no personal happiness that is all, finished. His happiness consists in the happiness of the people. If he has not risen to that level, he is not fit to be a king. He should not be a king. In other words, the king as conceived by India had no personal life. He must have already reached the point where everything that he does is for the collective good. Now, in democracy as at present, many of these elements are absent, but Sri Aurobindo says, "The coming of democracy is a sign of the true subjective age." But it doesn't mean that democracy is therefore the final form of the subjective age, not at all. In fact Sri Aurobindo has said that parliamentary democracy as it is practised in most of the countries — elsewhere other kind of democracies are practised, presidential form and so on, but ultimately it comes to parliamentary democracy, because even in America where it's a presidential form there is a Senate and the House of Representatives. Seen one way or the other it is a kind of Parliament — what is happening is, Sri Aurobindo says: all parliamentary democracy ends in plutocracy. Now it's a very important word: Parliamentary democracy ends in plutocracy. And what is plutocracy? Plutocracy is the rule of a few rich and wicked people. This is the very definition of it. There is no need of being more blunt. Plutocracy means a rule of a few rich and wicked people. This is the conclusion of all experiments in parliamentary democracy. And this we must know already, because Sri Aurobindo has written very clearly, this is a study already assumed. When we start making a new form of political organisation, or any kind of organisation in Auroville, we must know that we must not fall into a trap, of developing a parliamentary democracy. Residents' assembly is not the forum, according to me, of a parliamentary democracy, not at all. Sri Aurobindo speaks of democratic democracy. There is somewhere an expression of Sri Aurobindo: democratic democracy, not parliamentary democracy. Parliamentary democracy is a democracy which is run by representatives.

Individuals are put aside in whose name the democracy actually has come into being. All democrats speak in the form of individuals as if they are the greatest advocates of individuals. But each candidate in the Parliament says: I am the representative of individuals. So all individuals are thrown into the background. Individuals are in the background. I, I am the representative.

There is a very interesting account of democracy given by Laski. You know Laski is one of the greatest political thinkers of today. And he says that parliamentary democracy... he was himself a great democrat, but he has made a scathing criticism of parliamentary democracy. He says, the individuals who represent or who pretend to represent individuals, which individual do they represent? Can anybody represent another? This is a basic question. Who can represent every individual, you tell me, each individual is a spark of the divine will. Who will represent this individual? And supposing, your individuals who have sent you, change their opinion, what will happen to you? What is your representation? Is there something like a common will of all the individuals: will of A + will of individual B + will of individual C? Is it ever possible to have made a kind of calculus of this kind? So right at the very bottom, even theoretically, parliamentary democracy is based upon some kind of compromise and falsehood. So my request is that we are here to make a very detailed research — this is what I mean by advanced research. And Mother says that in life we have to make a research. We have to make and see surely that ultimately the Residents' Assembly is really a Residents' Assembly. It is not a representative assembly. It is Residents' Assembly and don't compromise on it. It is an assembly which looks after each and every individual resident. We have to arrive at that point where each individual resident is awake, he is alive and he is very keen, as Sri Aurobindo says, to perfect himself and to aid and to be aided by others' perfection. This is the stage where we should reach. And the Residents' Assembly is an instrument for springing into this. As long as individuals are simply put aside or simply taken up sometimes for getting their opinion, it is a mask and it is very inadequate and very, very unsatisfactory form of service to the divine consciousness. This is my reflection, it might be unpopular, but I must say what I feel personally.

We must take care that every individual develops. Today I find that we do not even know all the Aurovilians, which is a fact. There is only Mr Bala Baskar perhaps who knows all Aurovilians. He has a list of all the Aurovilians. And one of the members has come to me and said: one of the greatest difficulty in Auroville is that of communication. I was even telling the Entry Group day before yesterday that you should be able to communicate with all the Newcomers and they said there's no way of communicating at all! If I want to send a message to anybody, people are so far apart, there's no way unless you've got a e-mail which everybody may not possess, you can't communicate. Now this, I personally feel, is a great lacuna. We should find means of... I gave the example of Nolini-da, in early times of the Ashram: Sri Aurobindo used to write letters to sadhaks and Nolini-da — the greatness of Nolini-da we do not sufficiently know or estimate. He used to take a bag of all the letters of Sri Aurobindo and go from home to home personally to give these letters of Sri Aurobindo to each sadhak. This is called true individualism. Every individual was served by the secretary of the Ashram, and a very eminent person, as I told you: his Himalayan greatness cannot be measured. And that was a man who used to take the post — a kind of a postman who used to take to everybody Sri Aurobindo's answers. Because it was Sri Aurobindo's answer, it was such a precious thing! But this arrangement was made by the Ashram with one man who was fixed, who will take messages. And I think, with so many people here you should be able to find ways and means by which a message can be sent to anybody in Auroville. Why should it not be possible? This is one of the simplest things, if you really want to serve each and every individual, there should be at least a few people who know all the individuals quite well. If we do not know, it means that we are not caring for the Residents' Assembly really, we are not caring for individuals and whenever a society neglects some individuals there is bound to be pain, there is bound to be some kind of abscess, bound to be some kind of wound. We have got to redress this. There should be some individuals who are in charge. The very charge should be: please know all the people in Auroville. I would like to make a suggestion — a concrete suggestion: that Residents' Assembly — just as we have got a Working Committee, there should be a Unity Committee. There should be a Committee consisting of five, ten, twelve people which can be called Unity Committee, and I would like to suggest that this Unity Committee should have three or four fundamental functions. First of all, it should be a Committee which should constantly — you know like the Ganges in the plains, there should be constant flow of the waters of unity. They should initiate, they should spread constantly the

ideas of unity. All that unifies, all that harmonises, they should emphasise. The very function of this committee will be to emphasise the forces of unity in Auroville. They should be really in charge: whatever harmonises should be really brought to the notice of everybody. That is the first task, that is to say, all that Sri Aurobindo has written on unity should be brought to the notice of people from time to time so there is constant awakening, reawakening among the people. We speak of the everlasting day. In fact Sri Aurobindo wants an everlasting day and I think Auroville should be an everlasting date. It is not for some time but there should be a constant stream in which there is a constant awakening to the idea of unity. That will be the first charge of it.

Second charge will be that whenever there is a conflict, this committee should come into operation and should see how the conflict can be resolved. Sometimes you call it conflict resolution committee and so on. I would prefer to name it Unity Committee, because it is more than overcoming a conflict: how the forces of unity can be introduced.

Thirdly — in fact recently I came to know that the Working Committee has written a letter to Development Group on a certain subject regarding the installation of high-tension wires. Development Group had proposed it, approved of it and Working Committee had opposed it. Now how are you going to resolve this problem? Who will resolve this problem? It is residents who should do it. And it's this Unity Committee, if there is one, if it is constituted, who should be in charge of such a problem and see that all the interests — and this is one of the important preconditions I would like to make, as to how... Mother has said that anybody who is in charge of unifying should be capable of understanding very well all the conflicting opinions, with so much of identity that he can argue in favour of both the opposite points of view. This is the capacity he should have; and they should have a real love for everybody. This is a very important point. Once Mother herself told me, "You should love everyone." It was a tremendous commandment on me! One day, there was some problem and Mother told me, "You should be able to love everyone." It was like a blow bursting on my mind at that time with these words. Even now it continues, goes on bursting in my mind.

It is when a person is able to form a thesis, contrast it with antithesis, and arriving at synthesis that a true unity can be established. And Mother has said that synthesis is one in which all the conflicting views are satisfied. It's not as if you annul any point of view, they are really satisfied. That is the true synthesis. Everybody finds in it the affirmation of his own point of view. So I think that this should be the method, not only of this Unity Committee, but I would like to expand this and say that in all the committee meetings — there are many, many committees here, many meetings are taking place and many of them end in some kind of inconclusiveness and so on. I would really like to suggest, if you really want to make Auroville organisation a new kind of organisation, with a new stand, with a new vibration, I would say that there should be some specific rules, not in the form of rules and regulations, but specific modes of conducting a meeting. I was talking to somebody in the morning and I was saying that in every committee meeting you should first of all lay down the rules of the game, just as in cricket! If you want to play cricket, you have to follow the rules of cricket. If you want to play tennis, you have to follow the rules of tennis. Similarly, if you want to debate or if you want to discuss any point, there should ground rules for discussing. Discussing doesn't mean "I have an opinion" or "I don't object" or "I object with it". This is not really discussing. Three points I wanted to make were that in any discussion you should really appoint an umpire. For three things: he should not allow anybody to raise his voice beyond a certain pitch, because many of the quarrels arise because people speak in a certain aggressive manner. Maybe you are very greatly convinced about something and if you raise your voice there's nothing wrong but there is an aggressive voice. The umpire should say, "Please, as long as you make a point with an aggressive voice, it will not be counted. Speak in a very gentle, in a very steady manner, strong manner quite all right, but no aggressive manner." Heavens are not going to fall if your point of view doesn't get in. Keep very, very quiet. Secondly, if there is a difficulty of resolution, then you should bring the opposing points of view... The umpire should state that these are the opposing points of view, as I understand. Then he should ask the opponent to defend the proponent. That should be the capacity: if you are really opposing a point of view, you should have understood the other's point of view very well, and you should bring out where exactly you differ from it. And this you can do only when you can show that you have understood the proponent's point of view and ask the proponent to argue for the opponent's argument.

I tell you that with this kind of a development, people really think over problems seriously and sincerely. It's not merely public opinion making and throwing opinions. We are here in search of truth, not of opinion making. We are not here for likes and dislikes: "Oh! this I

don't like, this is my preferred idea, I'll come to the conclusion." This is not a game for it. This game of a quest of the truth and the harmony. So the umpire should really ask if there is a real conflict and a real impasse. This is the ground rule, that he should be able to tell both the parties: now you argue against your own point of view. And then let us see where you stand. And I tell you, once you come to this, you'll be able to come to a good agreement. And thirdly, we should follow this in any discussion, even without Unity Committee. Every discussion can come to harmony if what Mother has said can be followed. Mother has said, "There is no problem which men of good will sitting together with an ardent aspiration to harmonise, cannot resolve." There is no problem, therefore the umpire should say that now if we are still remaining at an impasse let us contemplate, let us bring all our good will into the picture, with a great quietude.

This, I think, is a kind of a yogic method of resolving the problems and I would really recommend that our Auroville organisation should develop methods of discussions on these lines.

To come back to Unity Committee, I would like to say that Unity Committee finally should have one very important function: to organise meetings with children, meetings with youth who are normally marginalized — which is a great pity. Young people are the real soul of our Auroville existence and we have to encourage young people, understand their problems. Unity Committee should have a special function: to keep in contact with children and young people and bring their aspirations to the forefront and find solutions to their problems. I would like to suggest that you should have Unity Committee formed and actually the Act says that apart from Working Committee, the Residents' Assembly can form any number of committees and it is perfectly possible within the present constitution to do so. There are many aspects, and I will not touch upon them, but I'll only speak of one or two more things and then conclude.

There is a suggestion that you should have a parliament consisting of thirty people chosen by the Residents' Assembly. That is one of the suggestions which have been made somewhere. Now one of the difficulties in Auroville that I find is choosing — and there is a lot of confusion on this subject: shall we vote, shall we not vote, shall we nominate, what shall we do? There is also an argument that Residents' Assembly consisting of at least one thousand people or more — this is a very unwieldy number, even if you bring them together at one place, it is a very difficult thing to have a debate and so on. I am not very sure but even if you need to have a smaller body, I'm not at all opposed to have smaller bodies representing a larger body but again you remember my word on representing. Don't call it a representation because that is not a very true state of affairs. You cannot represent, but you can say that for the sake or convenience of work, you can have smaller groups. Now, I am personally very happy that Auroville has developed several groups. Some people think it is too much and there should not be so many. I am not so very sure about it. I personally feel that although Residents' Assembly doesn't meet in a certain way, because of these small groups which have been formed — and some of them are very active and I have seen the quality of the work which is remarkable, like the Land Use group and Development group and Matrimandir group and... very, very... sincerely, they have done such a detailed work, amazing... the amount of devotion and commitment they manifest — through which the will of the people is being expressed in many ways. There need not be only one instrument through which the will of the people is expressed.

In Indian ancient system, they had actually ensured that the will of the people is expressed through various organisations, not one organisation. If in Auroville therefore there are many working units, economy units, there is FAMC, and then there is ABC and then there is Working Committee and many other groups, it's all healthy. The only problem is that there is no method by which propositions and oppositions which sometimes emerge because of multiplicity are resolved. That is why I suggested once again Unity Committee. Let there be so many groups, I do not mind. If you have a thirty people parliament, also I do not mind, but I would really recommend, please do not fall into the trap of electioneering. Electioneering is one of the processes by which many things which are not really healthy, certain unhealthy things, begin to develop.

In India at least, the ethos of India is such that no noble man comes forward to be elected. He cannot say, look I am better than all others and you elect me. This is supposed to be something that is entirely unethical. To say: "Look, I am better than all others, you all people come together, now you elect me." This is not regarded as noble at all! So how can you have this ordinary system of electioneering where everyone has to declare, "I am better

than all others and all people reject those people who are my competitors because they have no worth and I have the worth". This is egoistic. You should not oblige anybody to be put in a position of this kind. This is one of the reasons why I do not favour electioneering. I was told this morning that one of the good methods which were developed is that there is a method of nomination. The individual himself does not come forward but each resident may have the possibility of nominating. And then if these nominations come forward and there are so many of them, then, somebody told me that then we are referring again to residents to give votes which I'm not very much in favour of personally. I'm not necessarily opposed to a voting system. I mean there are some circumstances in which voting system is good. In certain circumstances voting system is not good. I have made a study of some of these problems and I tell you very rapidly two conclusions I've arrived at.

If there is a situation — everything depends upon the situation, don't make general rules: voting, no voting, one fourth majority, three fourth majority, don't make such rules — consider what is the situation that we want to deal with. Supposing I have a room in which five people are living together. Now the question is how shall we organise that room? Where shall we put the sofa? Where shall we put the bed? Where shall we put the table? This is the problem, this is the situation. Here perhaps if you take vote of all the five people and three people favour one, I would say allow this, three people's decision —majority decision, but for some time. After some time, allow two people's decision also. Let everybody have his own way of organising the room, do not object to it. It's a question of situation. Which situation do you want to deal with? There are situations where there is a debate on the principles of truth and falsehood. It is not a question of convenience of a room or likes or dislikes or a kind of a dining room where you have to see whether you should make this vegetable or that vegetable or more people will like this vegetable or less people will like that vegetable. These questions can be decided with majority or minority and you give sometimes preference to majority, sometimes to minority, and then everybody enjoys, by rotation. Don't make any kind of rigid rule that there should be really one-fourth vote or two-third vote, nothing. Situation doesn't demand that kind of rigidity. But sometimes there may be questions of truth of Auroville. Truth on which we stand. And there, opinions can be quite powerful. This is a different situation, when the conflict between one opinion and the other is quite sharp. In fact one of the reasons for freedom... There's a beautiful article written by Mill. In English... for those who have studied English literature, Mill's essay on liberty is supposed to be the final word on freedom. Because he says that there may be a debate in which all except one agree on a principle, but only one of them differs. And the truth may lie with that one and not with all the others. This is the reason why, he says, freedom should be allowed. And even the overwhelming majority has no right to impose its way upon that individual. Now in such a situation, according to me, there is no way of resolving a problem by majority, or minority or any such principle, or by voting one way or the other. There are three things that should be done in such a situation: first of all, when anybody raises a point of truth, one should be very respectful, first of all. Truth is the one thing on which we stand and by abdicating truth we fall. Therefore if anybody raises a question of the truth, we should be very quiet and respectful and try to understand what that truth is.

In India we had a system of *shastrartha*. You know there was a real debate, and winning of *shastra* was supposed to be something very fundamental and there used to be a debate. And one debate never... even if you win in the debate, it's not a winning. You should do at least six *shastras*, seven *shastrarthas* — seven times you should debate it with seven different groups, and in all of them you should win before you establish your point of view. This was the system. Now I don't recommend that you should have this very system, but try to understand the spirit in which it was proposed. It is not a matter of calling a meeting suddenly and saying what is your view, what is your view, what is your view... and suddenly somebody airing one opinion, another, another opinion... This is in any case not the right thing for Auroville to do, this is not the way in which a meeting should be conducted. There should be a real study of any proposition of this kind — a real study. Quest is the real method and if nothing ultimately succeeds, Unity Committee should be given a proposition. And even if there still remains a problem of anybody's principle of truth not being satisfied, he should at least be free to pursue what he believes is true.

This is where I leave at the present moment because I feel this is a very complex problem but I would like to underline: it's a complex problem and should not be resolved in an ordinary manner. As Sri Aurobindo says, very often great issues come before politicians but they don't deal with them greatly. This is Sri Aurobindo's statement in his chapter on

Inadequacy of the State Idea (The Ideal of Human Unity, p.278) Great problems come before politicians but they do not deal with them greatly. Similarly, we should also — if any great problem comes, please deal with those problems greatly, not in the ordinary manner. In other words, we must distinguish between the problems, the situations: one situation, another situation, varieties of situations, varieties of propositions and deal with them properly.

My final point is, regarding that very important statement that Sri Aurobindo has made about dominant minority. In every organisation, in every society, a time will come when a few people will automatically become dominant. And there are very important statements that Sri Aurobindo has made about dominant minority. Sometimes dominant minority is condemned by most of the people, criticised unnecessarily. In fact some of them are split (?) vehemently. Now, Sri Aurobindo has said, and I would like to read out to you a statement from *The Ideal of Human Unity*. These are the words, Sri Aurobindo has said: “*The perfect counsel for a dominant minority is always to recognise in good time the right hour for its abdication and*” — this is very important, not only abdication but before doing so: “*and for the imparting of its ideals, qualities, culture, experience to the rest of the aggregate or to as much of it as is prepared for that progress.*” In Auroville at least, I think, the time has come when young people should be allowed to come up. They should take charge of so many things, and I tell you, some of the young people whom I have met are extraordinarily good. They are doing their duties so well, so conscientiously. There is a possibility of their being criticised and they are discouraged: “Oh! they are not competent, what can that person do? Oh! he has no experience!” Please be very kind.

To develop what I would say deliberate training programs, deliberate. You need to prepare a band of new teachers. You need a very good program of training teachers. You need experts. You need to develop young people to arrive at expertise; deliberate attempt should be made to do that. You need new people who have got certain skills. Please train young people to have those skills. This is all that I would like to plead for in the present meeting because there are many other problems like villagers... Bhavana is just before me and people like her have done so much work for villagers and I fully appreciate, but there are many problems and I think that I have taken more time than what I had intended, so if you permit me, I would like to close here. Thank you so much for all this time that you gave.

THE INNER DIMENSION OF THE CITY

Kireet JOSHI

Sisters and brothers,

I think Auroville as it exists today is the most precious gift that the earth possesses. It has momentous potentialities and responsibilities. All of us who are here have to bear a new kind of torch that is still in the making. I think in the background of Auroville there is, what we may call a strategy. How to bring about a radical change in humanity as a whole and how to make the whole world a happy family? A family in which there is spontaneous sharing and a spontaneous move upwards.

It was in 1912 that Mother wrote for the first time of a place — in order the whole humanity may move upwards — she spoke of a place to be created. In the last chapter of *The Life Divine* Sri Aurobindo speaks of the arrival or the emergence of a new humanity and he speaks of the method by which a new humanity can be created. And he says that there are two possible ways: one is that human beings in different parts of the world prepare themselves while living in the world and developing very far and then later on combining together to make a nucleus of new humanity. Or else, a method by which people who aspire for truth and truth alone would come out of the old world, built a nucleus in a favourable climate where everything is turned to the truth, and then gradually growth. And he foresaw that it is perhaps this second method which nature will prefer.

But he has laid down there a very important warning: the warning is that people who would come together with an aspiration and who would have the favourable climate; by living together they will increase the force of the truth. But at the same time by living together in a concentrated circle each one will contribute to the incapacity that each one possesses. And therefore the force of incapacities also would be concentrated. Thereafter, he said, that in the past it is this concentration of incapacities which have not been able to meet the concentration of the Truth Force and as a result there is a break down and such groups have therefore not flourished to a very long extent and there has been a failure. Lastly, he said that this failure could be prevented only if the Divine Will has taken a decisive decision to protect it, to develop it, and that Will is maintained. We have seen that the Ashram, as Mother herself pointed out in her statement of the *Dream*, the Sri Aurobindo Ashram is a modest effort to build up that ideal grace, of which she speaks in her *Dream*, and for such a long period this nucleus has been developing.

At one time Mother said to me, at a very important stage in my own life, that I have three steps of my work. The first step was the Centre of Education (she referred to the Ashram Centre of Education). My second step is Auroville ? she told me this in 1971. And my third step is India and the world. This was the time when Sri Aurobindo's birth centenary was being celebrated all over the country, and some of us in the Ashram were discussing the question of Sri Aurobindo's solutions to the problems of the country. And a group of members of the Ashram were discussing various problems, studying Sri Aurobindo's works and then writing down in brief the problem and the solution given by Sri Aurobindo. And I had the privilege of reading out to the Mother the solutions given by Sri Aurobindo and Mother was correcting the statements that we were making in regard to the solutions given by Sri Aurobindo. And then, she wanted afterwards that whatever final document we produced (it was a very short document), She wanted the country to know about this document and that it should be spread all over it. And I was to go around the country at that time.

It is this vision of the Mother that inspired me tremendously. First step was, according to the Mother, a Centre of Education; the second step was Auroville; the third India and the world. The ultimate goal is the whole humanity. How does humanity move upwards and arrive at solutions of the problems? When I try to understand this aspect I have always referred to the last prose writings of Sri Aurobindo *The Supramental Manifestation on the Earth*. In these eight chapters which he wrote in 1949, he has put forward a vision. To us it is a vision, but when we read Sri Aurobindo we feel as if whatever he is writing is actually happening. For example he wrote in these chapters a chapter on the divine body. The divine body as an important or a crucial step for the manifestation of the supermind on the earth, and at that time the divine body was already being made ready in his own body. As Mother has said: "Whatever Sri Aurobindo writes is the result of his own experiences." And then, we will read the Mother's Agenda, thirteen volumes, it is actually the fabrication of the divine body. Without

the divine body ? one body at least ? which is perfected, where the matter becomes conscious of the indwelling spirit and manifests the spirit, that great task had to be completed. And on the 14th of March 1970 in the *Agenda* you read Mother's declaration "The work is done", and she repeats this statement several times: "The work is done." That is to say the divine body was ready. She says: "The work that Sri Aurobindo had given to me has been done." And the work that Sri Aurobindo had given to her was the impregnation, the permeation of the Supramental force in the physical body. And then she says, working it out may take hundreds of years, three hundred years, four hundred years, it does not matter, the work is done.

During the conversations around this time, there is a very important statement that Mother has made and that is that however great, however luminous and powerful one central body would be, there will be a necessity of a collectivity which responds to it. One superman coming on the earth, without that collectivity around, would not be able to accomplish the task. It is very significant that it is around this time, in 1968, that Mother inaugurated this great city, Auroville. And all this has a connection with the statement of the Mother in 1912, Sri Aurobindo's statement in *The Life Divine*, the statement on the divine body, and the experiment that Mother made to manifest the divine body. All this is the inner dimension, the basic inner dimension of Auroville.

I think Mother felt a need to create a body, a collectivity which would serve the purpose of receiving the light of the divine body, of organising itself into higher and higher moulds of living ? not only of being and thinking and feeling but of living, so that the work of the Supramental Manifestation could move faster and faster, and would succeed. In other words, the most important foundation of Auroville is the Supramental Consciousness. And I think when Mother wrote the invitation to men of goodwill, it is an invitation to all to understand the supermind; to participate in the activity or action of the supermind and to respond to it.

In the book *The Supramental Manifestation on Earth*, Sri Aurobindo has made a statement in four chapters: *Supermind and Humanity*, *Supermind in the Evolution*, *Mind of Light*, and the last chapter also *Supermind and the Mind of Light*. These four chapters are directly relevant to the work of Auroville. It is, you might say, the *manifesto* of Auroville. We are here for the Divine in humanity; the Divine that is moving upward with humanity. That is why the very first article of the Charter of Auroville is that: "To live in Auroville one must be a willing servitor of the Divine consciousness." Because that is the basic condition in which the study of the Supermind becomes possible.

I am reminded of the Mother's vision of the boat, many of us have read it, and I think that Auroville is a boat in which we are all recruited for purposes of training, and that is why Mother spoke in the second article of the Charter of Auroville of perpetual education. We are all under training and we must be here as candidates under training. All our imperfections, our human weaknesses, which particularly here will become manifest more and more because of the pressure... The difficulties, which I see in Auroville, are natural difficulties. There are difficulties of the pressure under which we put ourselves in the process of training. One may become disheartened to see the difficulties but that is one way of looking at it. The other way of looking at it is that we are under training and the sooner we embody more and more the aspiration and the effort to surmount the difficulties, the better and more glorious will be the outcome. But this is one part of what I call the foundational inner dimension. And there is a second aspect of the inner dimension.

The second dimension is the process of our training. Mother spoke of Auroville in two very important statements. One was that humanity has made a big mistake in the production of armaments of destruction. And, she pointed this out in this conversation which is in *The Agenda*. In 1981 when Mr M'Bow (The then Secretary General of UNESCO, who was a member of Auroville's International Advisory Council) came to Auroville and when Deepti in a meeting read this statement it inspired Mr M'Bow tremendously, because here Mother had declared the purpose of Auroville — and it puts a tremendous light on the work of Auroville — what I call the process of training in Auroville. She said, that because this mistake has been committed there is a tremendous danger because there is a psychology of the instrument of destruction ? not only of the human beings who possess the instruments of destruction but the psychology of the instruments themselves. And that psychology propels its use. You produce an instrument of war, an instrument of destruction and that instrument by its very existence produces a propulsion: "Use me". It should be used and this is a tremendous danger. Many people have piled up the armaments with a very pious wish and hope that they

will not be used. But this psychology which Mother had explained propels all the time: "Use, use me!" Now, what is the remedy for this? What is it that can counter-act this psychology of the instruments? Mother said, when I was contemplating this question I was told: it is for that purpose I have created Auroville. To counter act this mistake which humanity had made in producing armaments of destruction. How to counter-act? We have to realise that today's armaments are so deadly that if they are used there will be irremediable destruction — which cannot be remedied afterwards. Not only ecologically but even the instruments of the human body. So, this task is very important and is something that cannot avoid at all. This is the large context in which Auroville exists today. And we are undergoing a training because she said that the very process of the development of Auroville ? not only when Auroville will be completed ? but the process of its development will be a remedy to this psychology of the use of armaments.

And, it is one of the reasons why I feel Auroville has been attacked. The one instrument that Mother has produced here to counter-act all the piles of the armaments, if this instrument can be destroyed then the destruction of mankind will be very easy. Therefore it is a very precious gift which had been given by the Mother. If Auroville can survive, can develop, can move forward the whole of humanity can be saved. And therefore, in fact I am a personal witness, the terrible conflict and struggle that had gone into the process, and at many stages I could see that Auroville could be destroyed. Fortunately, I personally feel that we have passed through that difficult period. Auroville exists! Continuously exists to survive, to develop, to try. And a new consciousness is holding us on, and we are conscious today of the gift that this Auroville is for the mankind. But this gift can continue to survive and continue to develop only on one important condition: service to the Divine Will, discovery of the Divine Will and effective use of our being in the service of the Divine Will.

So, the question is what is the Divine Will? According to many religions Divine's will is manifested. It is written down in the *Bible* or the *Koran* or that kind of a scripture. It is, as it were, revealed once and for all. And the call is to implement what is now known to be the Divine will. But in Sri Aurobindo's vision there is no book, however great it may be, it may be the *Veda*, or the *Bhagavad Gita*, or any other, in which we find an answer to the question as to what is the Divine's Will ? at the highest crest of humanity's development today. Therefore Sri Aurobindo says: "The sadhaka of the Integral yoga is not the sadhaka of any book, he is the sadhaka of the infinite." And therefore, every individual who wants to discover the Divine Will may take the help from the past, from all the revelations, but he will not be bound by any one of them. It has to be a fresh discovery. Truth is constantly manifesting and the truth of yesterday is the not the truth of today. And one has to constantly be fresh to discover the truth at every moment.

Now what is the method of discovering the Divine's Will? The truth is triumphant only when it is fresh. Therefore there should be fresh inquiries every day. And the only method is a synthesis of knowledge, devotion and action. There is a very important sentence in the *Bhagavad Gita* which brings out the necessity of combining knowledge, devotion and action. In one of the chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita* it is said: "All my devotees are very dear to me, but, the devotee who combines knowledge with his devotion is particular dear to me — *Ativa priya*." And it is mentioned at a point where action is already described as a necessary part of this process and it is explained why this combination is necessary. It is said that only when the three are combined together that immortality is possible ? *Amritam*. It is a very important statement. You may have revelation at any stage without combining knowledge, action and devotion but that will not give you immortality ? it may be liberation.

Immortality was a great search of the *Veda*, *Upanishads* and the *Gita*. And it is immortality of which Sri Aurobindo speaks now in his writings. The conquest of death, not only by going above the death because that is also one of the conquests, when death does not affect you, but the elimination of the principle of death which can be achieve when you combine these three aspects. Intensification of cognition, conation and affection ? the three powers of our psychology. To intensify them, to purify them, to combine them together progressively, potently. This particular movement is a movement that Sri Aurobindo describes in a very important chapter in *The Synthesis of Yoga*, connected with Karma yoga, where he describes the works of knowledge, the works of love and the works of life force. When the three activities in which we are constantly engaged can be constantly utilised by us as a sacrifice, as an offering to the Divine, then love, knowledge and action can be combined and we discover the Divine's Will.

In very simple terms, once Mother has explained to me, when I had to give a message from her to some group. She told me to give a message from her: "We are here to discover and execute the Divine's Will." And then she said you tell them how to discover the Divine's will, and she said, when you go above all desire, the root of the desire, all preferences, then only are you fit to discover the Divine's Will. To my mind the second inner dimension of Auroville is connected with this. While doing every activity we offer it to the Divine in search of the Divine's Will, so that we can serve it by offering our preferences. In fact, it is easier to give up desire but preferences are extremely difficult ? our preferred idea particularly, to offer the preferred idea. The preferred idea to which you arrived after a lot of consideration, and when you arrive at a conclusion then to give it up.

We have for example Mother's statement as to how at one stage, between 1926 and 28, she was creating a new world and she was inviting the gods on the earth so the new world can be built. And she had prepared the whole strategy and every aspect of it and then she offered it to Sri Aurobindo and he said -it is a very interesting statement- that he appreciated her work very much and that it would make her very celebrated in the world, but then he added: "But this is not our work. We want the Truth in its entirety. We want the supramental Truth not the overmind Truth." And when she had heard Sri Aurobindo, she went to her room and simply destroyed the whole strategy that she had prepared. It is this attitude of surrender, that all our preferred ideas, all that we have prepared if it is necessary, if we find it is not the Divine's Will, to be able to give it up. To my mind the second inner dimension of Auroville is this fire in us, a constant fire which is in search of the Divine's Will, which wants to offer every idea, every wish which is personal to us, which does not bear the imprint of the Divine Will. This is what I call a training. We are here for a period, for a great stage of training.

The third is... This is the outer manifestation of Auroville: the organisation of Auroville. A progressive organisation because we do not know what is the ideal organisation. It is to be worked out. We have guidelines, we have glimpses of what is to be, but how it will work out we do not as yet know. To be in search of an ideal organisation, inwardly devoted to this task, very sincerely. Our organisation should be such that it does not prevent, that it does not become an obstacle for the free growth of the Spirit. How to avoid mechanisation of life? How to avoid routinisation of life? How to make life constantly fresh? This is our search.

Fortunately, Mother has given detailed guidelines on this subject. Sri Aurobindo has given detailed ideas on this. Even recently an Aurovilian wrote a note to me in which he quoted a passage from the Mother. When an American had come to see the Ashram and yet made many remarks about the inadequacies of the processes of the organisation of the Ashram. And how Sri Aurobindo came to the Mother and said to her to write down and gave a guidance to what is the ideal way of organising. Since I do not remember every word of it I will not repeat myself but I suggest that this is a very important passage that Caryl has discovered in the writings of the Mother and it should be given to everyone, because while we are trying to make a new organisation this statement is very important.

Once Mother had told me, I do not have a set of pigeonholes in which I can then put pigeons. That is the normal mental method of organisation. You develop constantly with the fire and with the will a constant burning goodwill which simply says: truth, harmony, goodwill, discipline. In fact these are the four words which Mother has written in a message which I find in the Matrimandir. Very beautiful ? goodwill, harmony, discipline, truth. If you keep in mind this proposition, all the time, these terms in all your activities and allow them to flow then gradually the ideal form of organisation will emerge. And this has a tremendous effect because the whole world today is at a halting point. The whole world is moving round and round without an issue, without a solution because the world does not know how to organise itself. The organisational problem is extremely important. If you can therefore develop an organisation with this kind of fashioning tool, a burning goodwill then it will be very useful for the whole of mankind. This is according to me the third inner dimension of the city that is in making.

Thank you.

Spring 2001

MOTHER'S AGENDA

11 March 1964

I'll read you something.

It concerns an American who came here full of all the American ideas, who did a survey of everything (the way the services are organized and so on), and who sent me his report in which he says that everything lacks organization, a mental structure.... I didn't intend to answer him, but the day before yesterday, just when I was going to retire for the night, Sri Aurobindo told me insistently – he came and told me, "Here is what you must say to T." And he insisted until I had written it down – I was forced to write it!

Sri Aurobindo has told us (it's he himself who said it) and we are convinced by experience that above the mind there is a consciousness much wiser than the mental wisdom, and in the depths of things there is a will much more powerful than the human will.

All our endeavour is to make this consciousness and this will govern our lives and action and organise all our activities. It is the way in which the Ashram has been created. Since 1926 when Sri Aurobindo retired and gave me full charge of it (at that time there were only two rented houses and a handful of disciples) all has grown up and developed like the growth of a forest, and each service was created not by any artificial planning but by a living and dynamic need. This is the secret of constant growth and endless progress. The present difficulties come chiefly from psychological resistances in the disciples who have not been able to follow the rather rapid pace of the sadhana and the yielding to the intrusion of mental methods which have corrupted the initial working.

A growth and purification of the consciousness is the only remedy.